

COMMENDING ROGER HOLMES—
RECIPIENT OF THE 2000 NA-
TIONAL WETLANDS AWARD

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 15, 2000

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Roger Holmes, a friend, former Director of the Fish and Wildlife Division at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), and a recipient of this year's National Wetlands Award. The sky blue water of Minnesota's ten thousand plus lakes have kept their sparkle because folks like Roger Holmes built a lifetime career around preserving Minnesota's precious resources.

A product of Minnesota's schooling, Roger received a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Minnesota where he also conducted graduate study in wildlife management. For the next 41 years, Roger received an even better education from the school of hard knocks learning how to combine on the ground know-how with academic knowledge, and at the same time, apply it to the political process. From his early days as a biologist on up to Assistant Supervisor at the Minnesota Conservation Department, and to his most recent position as Director of the Fish and Wildlife Division at the MDNR, Roger remained courageous and passionate, yet in tune with the bureaucratic process. In short, he knew his way around, suffered fools poorly, and made many directors and legislators look good along the way.

I had the pleasure as a State Representative of working with Roger during his stint with the Section of Game and Fish at the MDNR to pass the landmark Minnesota Outdoor Recreation Act with State Senator Willett, and enacting new protections for Minnesota nongame species. Throughout this time, Roger was outspoken and objective, not always giving answers that we "policymakers" wanted to hear during our brain storming sessions. Although the facts may not always have been pleasant, this process and Roger Holmes' forthright intellectual responses were translated into sound policy; the good result of a true public servant and defender of the environment.

More recently, Roger was one of the state's most outspoken supporters of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act which would provide \$350 million annually to the Pittman-Robertson fund for wildlife conservation and restoration. Receiving positive feedback from Holmes and other committed MDNR employees provided a good foundation for me to enter into negotiations for this legislation. Roger Holmes will not have the pleasure of directly using these funds, but it should be noted that indirectly this program is part of the legacy that Roger has shaped. Roger has become a fixture at the MDNR, and will be sorely missed in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, Roger Holmes deserves our utmost gratitude and admiration for all his hard work and dedication over the years. Please join me in congratulating Mr. Roger Holmes on this prestigious National Wetlands Award, and in wishing Roger, his wife Barbara, and his three children, Kristin, Brad, and Greg, all the best as they embark on a new beginning.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 60TH AN-
NUAL AMERICAN LEGION FLAG
RAISING DAY PARADE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 15, 2000

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th Annual American Legion Flag Raising Day Parade cosponsored by the American Legion and the Joint Veteran's Affairs Committee of West New York, NJ, in cooperation with the townships of North Bergen, West New York, and Guttenberg.

By honoring our veterans and our flag, the American Legion Flag Raising Day Parade expresses the enduring pride that we Americans feel in our country and our way of life; we can thank our veterans for both.

The two veterans organizations sponsoring this patriotic parade are vital to the preservation and celebration of American heritage. They understand the power and value of our history: Yesterday, they served in the armed services to preserve America; today, they serve in our communities to preserve our heritage.

It is important that we never forget our past and those who fought for our freedom and our future. That is why we remember and honor those who fought and died for our country—it is the least we can do for their sacrifice.

Today, I extend my gratitude to those who have come together to honor America's veterans, and I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the 60th Annual American Legion Flag Day Parade.

HONORING KATHI McDONNELL-
BISSEL FOR OUTSTANDING
SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 15, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to join the Milford Senior Center as they celebrate their 30th Anniversary and pay special tribute to an outstanding individual, and my dear friend, Kathi McDonnell-Bissell.

The senior community of Milford, Connecticut is indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated individual working on its behalf. As the Executive Director of this tremendous organization, Kathi has transformed the Milford Elderly Services Agency. When she first came to our community, the Elderly Services Agency was run by two full time and one part-time staff members and located in a church basement. Today, centered at the Milford Senior Center, the agency has grown into a quasi-municipal office, working with the Mayor and city officials to ensure that the ongoing needs of the elderly are a priority in the community. Kathi has been the driving force behind this incredible transformation—her unwavering commitment leaving an indelible mark on our community.

Kathi's extraordinary record of service to the residents of Milford extends beyond her work at the Senior Center. She has been an instrumental force in bringing a number of social

service programs to Milford, as well as creating a city-wide network of social services. She has played an integral role in the development of the city's first food bank, furniture exchange, and emergency housing programs. Kathi also began a city-wide project to ensure that no child in the city of Milford would go to bed hungry. Her many contributions to the entire Milford community are truly invaluable.

Kathi has been recognized by numerous local, state and national organization for her tremendous work—a remarkable tribute to her outstanding commitment to public service. Perhaps more importantly, behind the myriad of awards, citations, and recognitions, one can always find the warm, nurturing character that has endeared Kathi to everyone who has had the pleasure and privilege of working with her. I cannot begin to express my thanks and appreciation for the assistance that she has given to me, my staff, my family, . . . our community.

I am honored to stand today and join the family, friends, and community members who have gathered today to pay tribute to Kathi McDonnell-Bissell. I am sure I speak for many in saying that her undaunted spirit and vision has been an inspiration to us all. The Milford community is truly indebted to her for the compassion, generosity, and commitment she has shown.

OLAYA DANCE STUDIO

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 15, 2000

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to an integral part of our cultural community, the Olaya Dance Studio of Corpus Christi, Texas. They will be holding their annual recital this weekend on Saturday, June 17, and I want them to know how much we appreciate what they do.

In the Coastal Bend of South Texas, Olaya Dance Studio contributes mightily to the entertainment of the area through the dancing of children. It is, after all, children who fascinate us as well as entertain us, and teach us a little bit about ourselves.

The dancers at Olaya range in age from 3 through adult. They do a host of dances but are known particularly for Flamenco, which is Spanish classical dance, and Folklorico, traditional Mexican dances from different regions in Mexico. There are nearly 100 dancers, and Olaya Dance Studio attracts both boys and girls.

There are certain times of the year when people around Corpus Christi just cannot get enough of these talented young people. These dancers perform a valuable cultural community service. South Texans celebrate two holidays that are unique to the Southwest Border, Cinco de Mayo and the 16 de Septiembre.

Cinco de Mayo pays homage to a great Mexican battlefield victory over the French in the 19th Century. The 16 de Septiembre celebrates Mexican Independence Day. On these two holidays, and for many other holidays throughout the year, including birthdays, anniversaries or other special occasions, the Olaya dancers are in great demand. They will even go to dinners held at homes of area restaurants to perform for special events.